

Fig. 1A

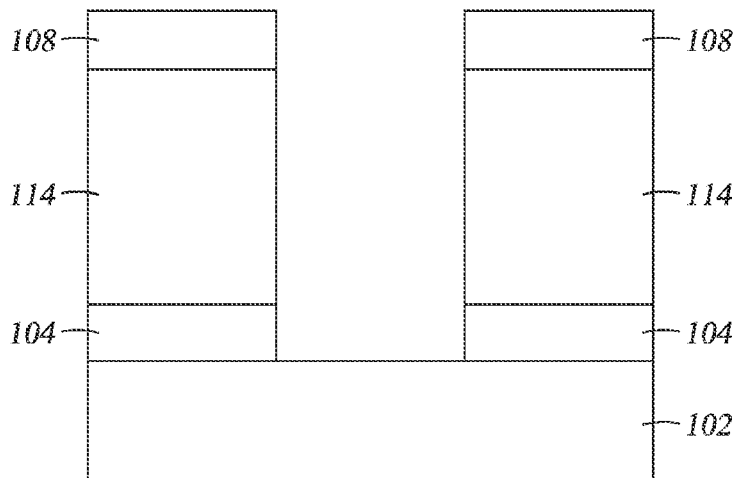


Fig. 1B

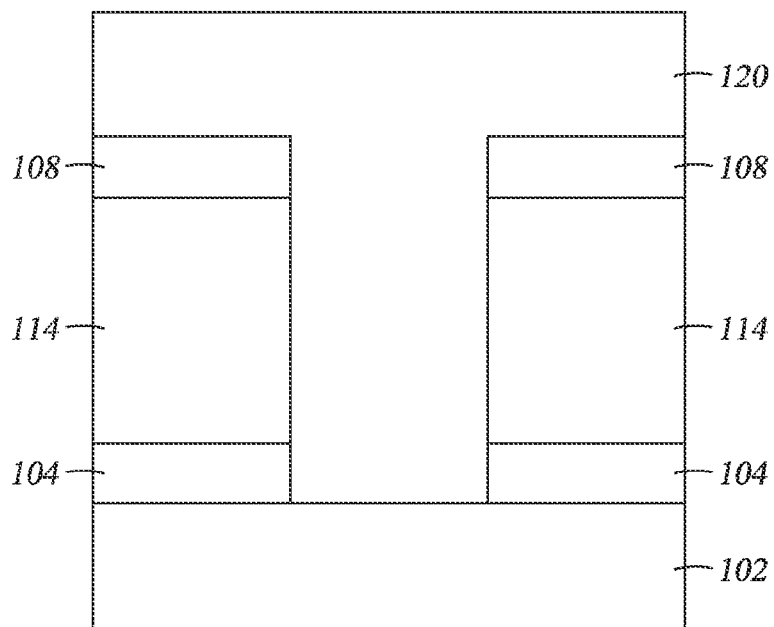


Fig. 1C

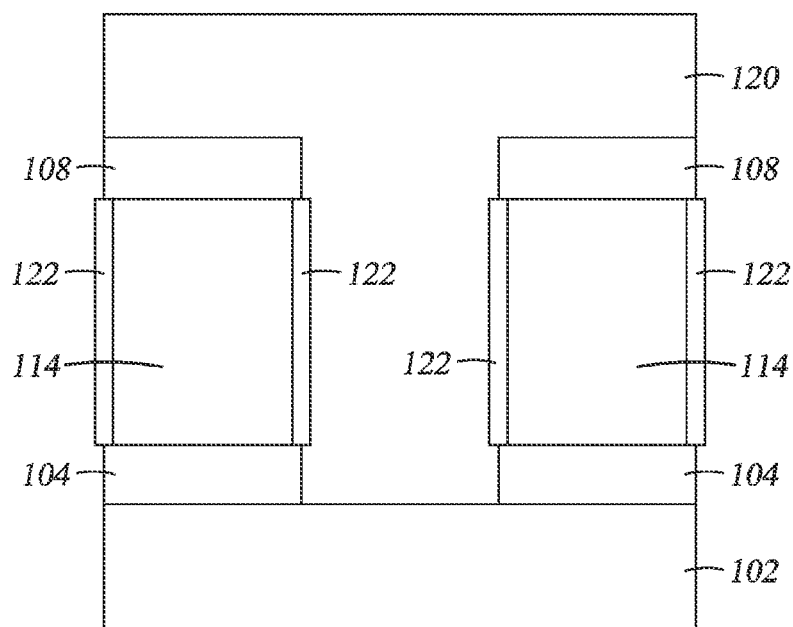


Fig. 1D

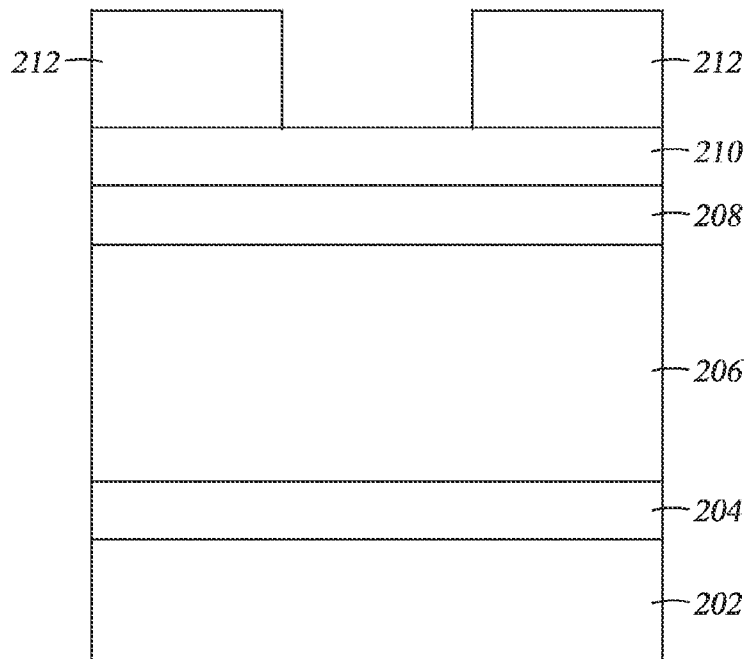


Fig. 2A

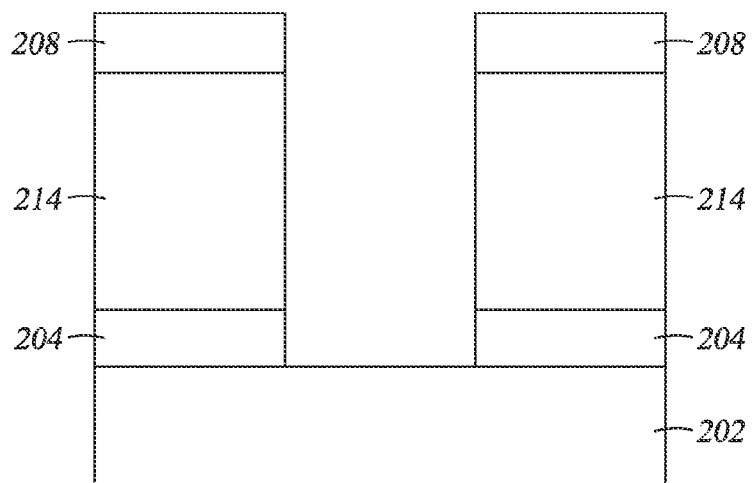


Fig. 2B

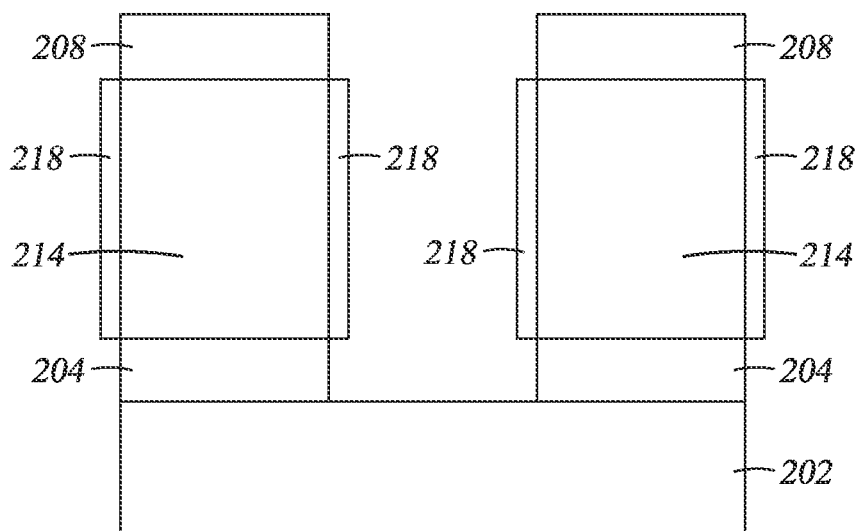


Fig. 2C

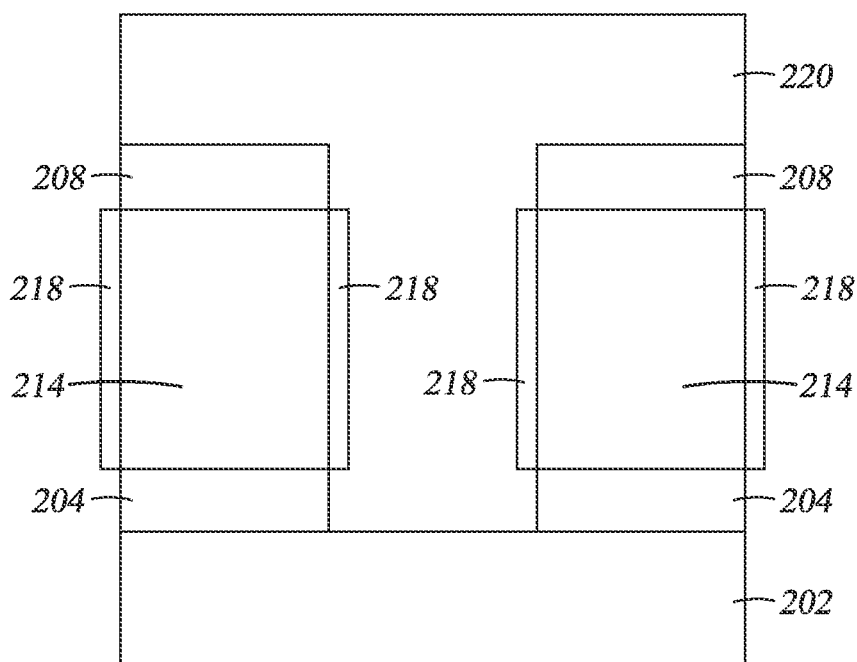


Fig. 2D

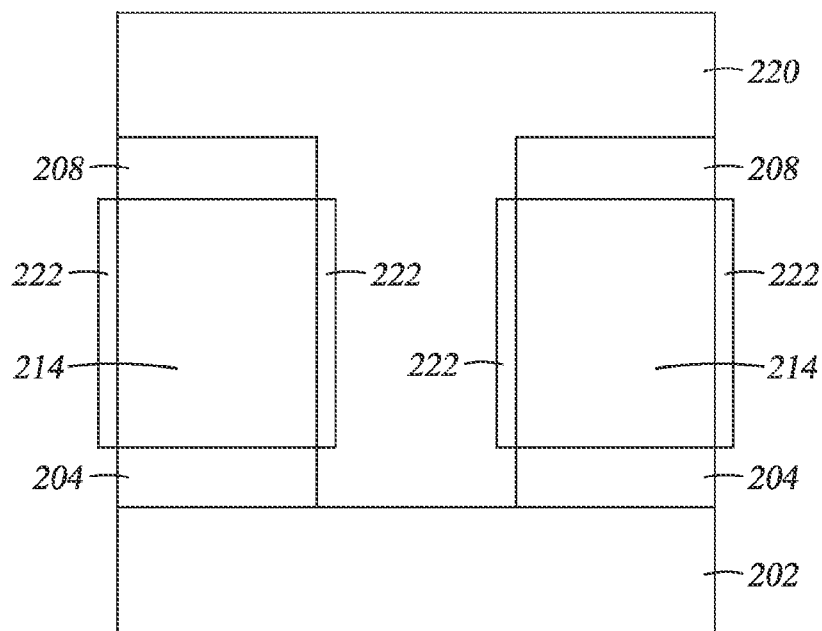


Fig. 2E

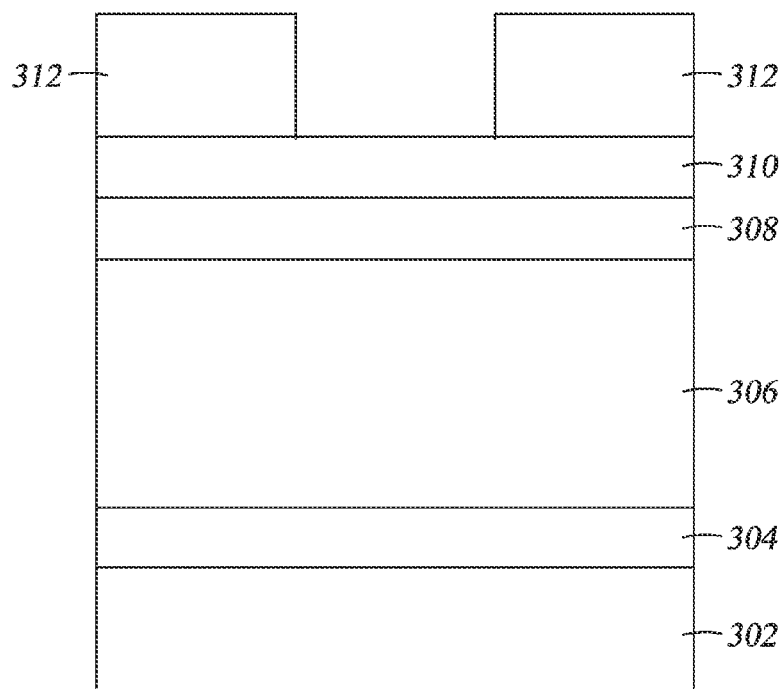


Fig. 3A

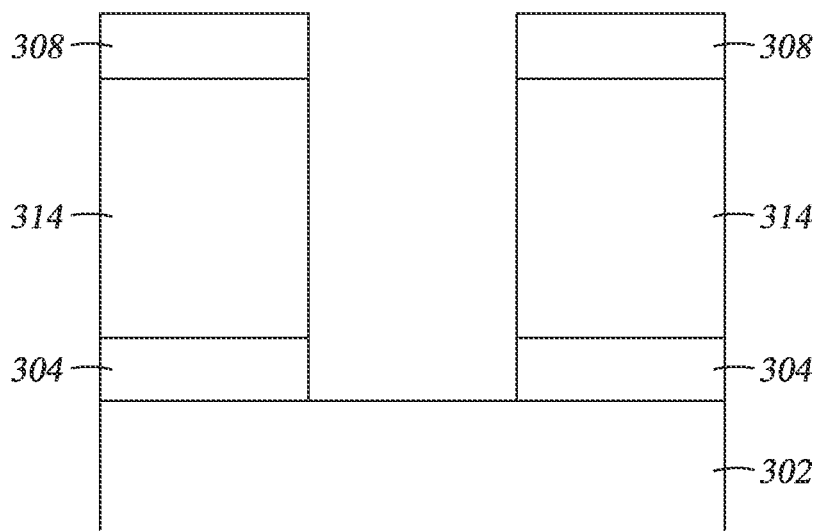


Fig. 3B

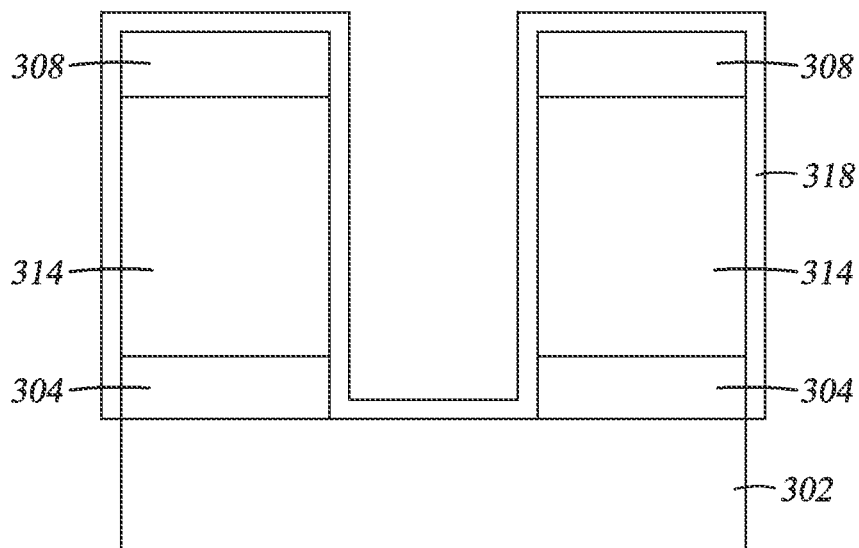


Fig. 3C

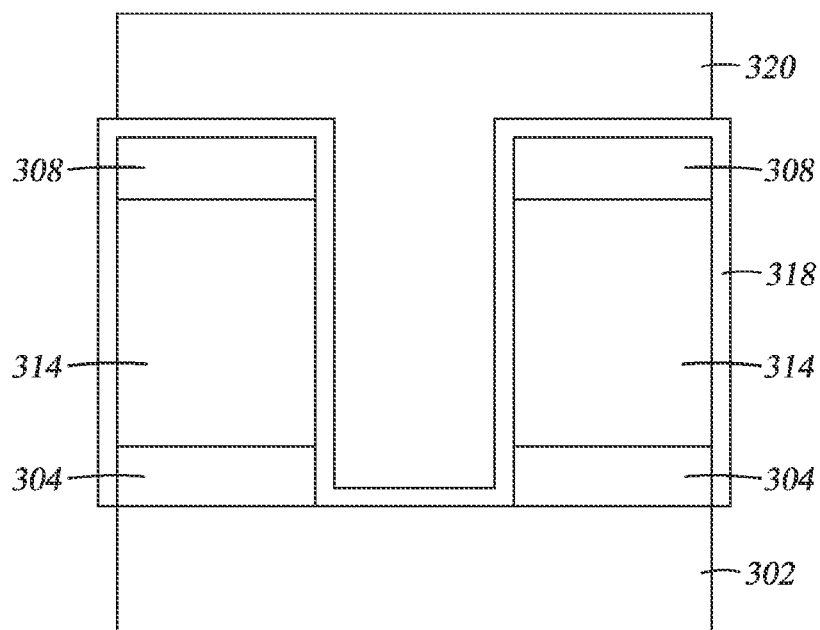


Fig. 3D

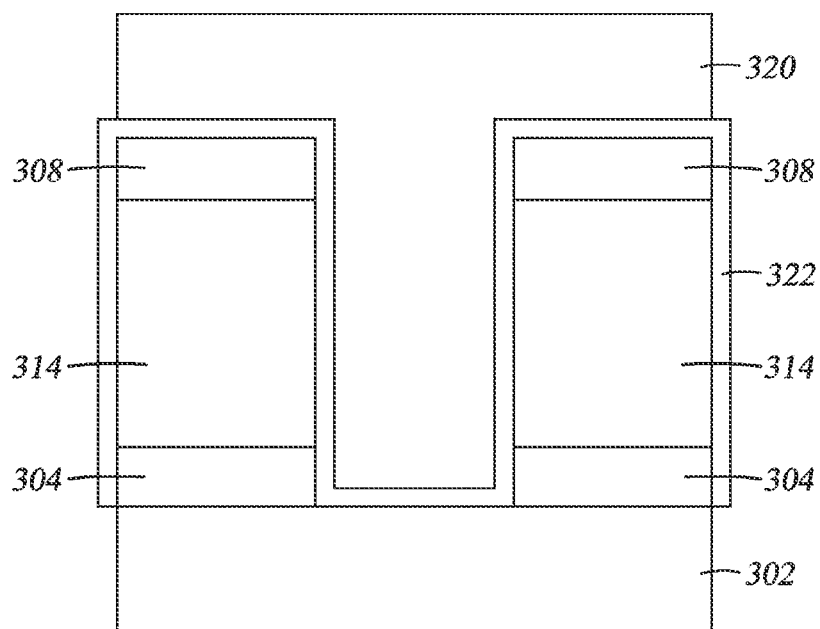


Fig. 3E

1

INTEGRATED CLUSTER TO ENABLE NEXT GENERATION INTERCONNECT

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application is a divisional application of co-pending U.S. patent application Ser. No. 14/180,098, filed on Feb. 13, 2014, which claims benefit of U.S. Provisional Patent Application Ser. No. 61/790,352, filed on Mar. 15, 2013. Each of

BACKGROUND

1. Field

Embodiments of the present invention generally relate to a process of forming an encapsulation layer.

2. Description of the Related Art

Integrated circuits have evolved into complex devices that can include millions of components (e.g., transistors, capacitors and resistors) on a single chip. The evolution of chip designs continually requires faster circuitry and greater circuit densities. The demand for greater circuit densities necessitates a reduction in the dimensions of the integrated circuit components.

As the dimensions of the integrated circuit components are reduced (e.g., sub-micron dimensions), the materials used to fabricate such components contribute to the electrical performance of such components. For example, low resistivity metal interconnects provide conductive paths between the components on integrated circuits.

One method for forming vertical and horizontal interconnects is by a damascene or dual damascene method. In the damascene method, one or more dielectric materials, such as the low k dielectric materials, are deposited and pattern etched to form the vertical interconnects, e.g., vias, and horizontal interconnects, e.g., lines. Conductive materials, such as copper containing materials, and other materials, such as barrier layer materials used to prevent diffusion of copper containing materials into the surrounding low k dielectric, are then inlaid into the etched pattern. However, due to the size induced resistivity effects, conventional damascene process flows may soon reach a scaling impasse.

Therefore, an improved method of forming the metal interconnects and passivation layers to prevent metal diffusion is needed.

SUMMARY

Embodiments of the present invention generally relate to methods for forming a metal structure and passivation layers. In one embodiment, metal columns are formed on a substrate. The metal columns are doped with manganese, aluminum, zirconium, or hafnium. A dielectric material is deposited over and between the metal columns and then cured to form a passivation layer on vertical surfaces of the metal columns.

In one embodiment, a method for forming passivation layers is disclosed. The method includes forming metal columns over a substrate, and each metal column is doped with manganese, aluminum, zirconium, or hafnium. The method further includes depositing a dielectric material between and over the metal columns, and curing the dielectric material to form a passivation layer on vertical surfaces of the metal columns.

In another embodiment, a method for forming passivation layers is disclosed. The method includes forming metal col-

2

umns over a substrate, selectively depositing a conformal layer comprising manganese, aluminum, zirconium, or hafnium on vertical surfaces of the metal columns, depositing a dielectric material between and over the metal columns and the conformal layer, and curing the dielectric material to form a passivation layer on the vertical surfaces of the metal columns.

In another embodiment, a method for forming passivation layers is disclosed. The method includes forming metal columns over a substrate, depositing a dielectric layer comprising silicon nitride or carbon doped silicon nitride over the metal columns and the substrate and on vertical surfaces of the metal columns, depositing a dielectric material between and over the dielectric layer, and curing the dielectric material to form a passivation layer over and on the vertical surfaces of the metal columns.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

So that the manner in which the above recited features of the present invention can be understood in detail, a more particular description of the invention, briefly summarized above, may be had by reference to embodiments, some of which are illustrated in the appended drawings. It is to be noted, however, that the appended drawings illustrate only typical embodiments of this invention and are therefore not to be considered limiting of its scope, for the invention may admit to other equally effective embodiments.

FIGS. 1A-1D depict schematic cross sectional views of a patterned feature on a substrate at different process steps according to an embodiment described herein.

FIGS. 2A-2E depict schematic cross sectional views of a patterned feature on a substrate at different process steps according to an embodiment described herein.

FIGS. 3A-3E depict schematic cross sectional views of a patterned feature on a substrate at different process steps according to an embodiment described herein.

To facilitate understanding, identical reference numerals have been used, where possible, to designate identical elements that are common to the figures. It is contemplated that elements and features of one embodiment may be beneficially incorporated in other embodiments without further recitation.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Embodiments of the present invention generally relate to methods for forming a metal structure and passivation layers. In one embodiment, metal columns are formed on a substrate. The metal columns are doped with manganese, aluminum, zirconium, or hafnium. A dielectric material is deposited over and between the metal columns and then cured to form a passivation layer on vertical surfaces of the metal columns.

FIGS. 1A-1D depict schematic cross sectional views of a patterned feature on a substrate at different process steps according to an embodiment described herein. As shown in FIG. 1A, a metal barrier layer **104** is disposed over a layer **102**. The layer **102** may be a dielectric layer disposed over conductive contacts disposed at a lower level. The barrier layer **104** may include one or more barrier materials such as, for example, tantalum, tantalum nitride, tantalum silicon nitride, titanium, titanium nitride, titanium silicon nitride, tungsten nitride, silicon nitride, ruthenium nitride, derivatives thereof, alloys thereof and combinations thereof. The barrier layer **104** may be formed using a suitable deposition process, such as atomic layer deposition (ALD), chemical vapor deposition (CVD), physical vapor deposition (PVD) or electroless deposition.

A conductive layer **106** is disposed over the barrier layer **104**. The conductive layer **106** may be a doped metal such as copper (Cu), cobalt (Co), or tungsten (W) doped with manganese (Mn), aluminum (Al), zirconium (Zr), or hafnium (Hf). The conductive layer **106** may be a doped silicide such as nickel silicide or cobalt silicide doped with Mn, Al, Zn, or Hf. In one embodiment, the conductive layer **106** is Cu doped with Mn. A metal etch hard mask layer **108** is disposed over the conductive layer **106** and a bottom anti reflecting coating (BARC) layer **110** is disposed over the metal etch hard mask layer **108**. A photoresist layer **112** is disposed over the BARC layer **110**. One or more reactive ion etching (RIE) processes are performed to transfer the pattern of the photoresist layer **112** to the BARC layer **110**, the metal etch hard mask layer **108**, and the conductive layer **106**. The remaining photoresist layer **112** and the BARC layer **110** are subsequently removed, leaving metal columns **114** sandwiched between the metal etch hard mask layer **108** and the barrier layer **104**, as shown in FIG. 2B.

Alternatively, the metal columns **114** may be formed with a sacrificial layer. The sacrificial layer, such as silicon oxide, may be deposited over the layer **102** before the deposition of the conductive layer **106**. Trenches are formed in the sacrificial layer and the conductive layer **106** and barrier layer **104** are deposited into the trenches. The sacrificial layer is subsequently removed, forming the metal columns **114**.

After the formation of the metal columns **114**, a degas and pre-clean process is performed to remove any moisture and to reduce any metal oxide. The pre-clean process may be varied ranging from H₂ anneal to H₂ or NH₃ plasmas or derivatives of the same. In an integrated fashion (under vacuum), the substrate is moved to a process chamber, where a flowable low k dielectric film **120** is deposited over and between the metal columns **114**, the metal etch hard mask layer **108** and the barrier layer **104**, as shown in FIG. 1C. The low k dielectric film **120** may include carbon-containing silicon oxides (SiOC), such as BLACK DIAMOND® and BLACK DIAMOND® II available from Applied Materials, Inc., of Santa Clara, Calif.

Next, the substrate may be transferred to another process chamber while under vacuum. The low k dielectric film **120** is cured through a thermal process combined with UV or e-beam as additional energy sources. Alternatively, the curing of the dielectric film **120** may be performed in the same chamber where the low k dielectric film **120** is deposited.

The curing temperature is about 400 degrees Celsius or higher, and at this temperature, the dopants in the metal columns **114** out diffuse to the vertical surfaces of the metal columns **114**. The dopants' out diffusion is not only due to the thermal considerations, but also the dopants' affinity to oxygen, which is a component of the low k dielectric film **120**. At the interface between the vertical surfaces of the metal columns **114** and the low k dielectric film **120**, the dopants react with oxygen and silicon in the low k dielectric film **120**, forming silicate type passivation layers **122**. The passivation layers **122** may comprise manganese silicate (MnSiO_x), aluminum silicate (AlSiO_x), zirconium silicate (ZrSiO_x), or hafnium silicate (HfSiO_x). The silicate type passivation layers **122** may prevent metal diffusion into the dielectric film **120**, hence passivate the metal columns. The passivation layers **122** are self-aligned when self-formed on exposed metal surfaces.

FIGS. 2A-2E depict schematic cross sectional views of a patterned feature on a substrate at different process steps according to an embodiment described herein. As shown in FIG. 2A, the substrate has a conductive layer **206** disposed over a barrier layer **204** and a dielectric layer **202**. The con-

ductive layer **206** may be a metal such as Cu, Co, W or a silicide such as nickel silicide or cobalt silicide. In one embodiment, the conductive layer **206** is Cu. A photoresist layer **212**, a BARC layer **210**, and a metal etch hard mask layer **208** are disposed over the conductive layer **206**.

One or more RIEs are performed to transfer the pattern of the photoresist layer **212** to the conductive layer **206**. As a result, metal columns **214** are formed, as shown in FIG. 2B. A degas and pre-clean process is performed to remove any moisture and to reduce any metal oxide. The pre-clean process may be varied ranging from H₂ anneal to H₂ or NH₃ plasmas or derivatives of the same. In an integrated fashion (under vacuum), the substrate is moved to a process chamber in which conformal layers **218** are selectively deposited on the vertical surfaces of the metal columns **214**. The conformal layer **218** comprises Mn, Al, Zr, or Hf. The selective deposition of the conformal layers **218** on the vertical surfaces of the metal columns **214** may be achieved by first deactivating the surfaces of the dielectric layer **202**, the barrier layer **204**, and the metal etch hard mask layer **208**. The deactivation may be accomplished by any suitable method, such as reacting the surfaces to be deactivated with alkylsilane compounds either in vapor phase or in solution. After the surfaces of the dielectric layer **202**, the barrier layer **204**, and the metal etch hard mask layer **208** are deactivated, the conformal layers **218** may be deposited by CVD and the conformal layers **218** would only formed on the vertical surfaces of the metal columns **214**, as shown in FIG. 2C.

In an integrated fashion (under vacuum), the substrate is moved to a process chamber, where a flowable low k dielectric film **220** is deposited over and between the metal columns **214**, the conformal layers **218**, the metal etch hard mask layer **208** and the barrier layer **204**, as shown in FIG. 2D. The low k dielectric film **220** may include carbon-containing silicon oxides (SiOC), such as BLACK DIAMOND® and BLACK DIAMOND® II available from Applied Materials, Inc., of Santa Clara, Calif. The deposition of the low k dielectric film **220** is at a low temperature where the conformal layers **218** would not react with the oxygen and the silicon in the dielectric film **220**.

Next, the substrate may be transferred to another process chamber while under vacuum. The low k dielectric film **220** is cured through a thermal process combined with UV or e-beam as additional energy sources. Alternatively, the curing of the dielectric film **220** may be performed in the same chamber where the low k dielectric film **220** is deposited.

The curing temperature is about 400 degrees Celsius or higher, and at this temperature, conformal layers **218** react with oxygen and silicon in the low k dielectric film **220**, forming silicate type passivation layers **222**. The passivation layers **222** may comprise manganese silicate (MnSiO_x), aluminum silicate (AlSiO_x), zirconium silicate (ZrSiO_x), or hafnium silicate (HfSiO_x). The silicate type passivation layers **222** may prevent metal diffusion into the dielectric film **220**, hence passivate the metal columns. The passivation layers **222** are self-aligned when self-formed on exposed metal surfaces.

FIGS. 3A-3E depict schematic cross sectional views of a patterned feature on a substrate at different process steps according to an embodiment described herein. As shown in FIG. 3A, the substrate has a conductive layer **306** disposed over a barrier layer **304** and a dielectric layer **302**. The conductive layer **306** may be a metal such as Cu, Co, or W. The conductive layer **306** may also be a silicide such as nickel silicide or cobalt silicide. In one embodiment, the conductive

5

layer **306** is Cu. A photoresist layer **312**, a BARC layer **310**, and a metal etch hard mask layer **308** are disposed over the conductive layer **306**.

Again one or more RIEs may be performed to form metal columns **314**, as shown in FIG. **3B**, and a degas and pre-clean process may be performed to remove any moisture and to reduce any metal oxide.

Next, as shown in FIG. **3C**, a dielectric layer **318** is conformally deposited over the dielectric layer **302** and the metal etch hard mask layer **308**, and on the sides of the metal etch hard mask layer **308**, the metal columns **314**, and the barrier layer **304**. The dielectric layer **318** may be silicon nitride (SiN), or carbon doped silicon nitride (SiCN). If the dielectric layer is deposited at a high temperature in excess to 300 degrees Celsius, and the thickness of the dielectric layer is between about 1 to about 10 nm, the dielectric layer may have good barrier properties. However, the dielectric layer deposited at over 300 degrees Celsius does not provide sufficient counter stress to prevent hillocking of the metal columns **314** under temperature excursion. Thus, the dielectric layer **318** may be deposited at a lower temperature, such as between about 50 degrees Celsius to about 200 degrees Celsius.

In one embodiment, the dielectric layer **318** is a SiCN layer and is deposited by CVD. The silicon-containing precursors may also contain carbon for the CVD of SiCN layer. The silicon containing precursors may be 1,3,5-trisilapentane, 1,4,7-trisilaheptane, disilacyclobutane, trisilacyclohexane, 3-methylsilane, silacyclopentene, silacyclobutane, and trimethylsilylacetylene, among others. In addition to the silicon-containing precursor, an energized nitrogen-containing precursor, such as ammonia, hydrazine, amines, NO, N₂O, or NO₂ may be added to the deposition chamber. The energized nitrogen-containing precursor may contribute some or all of the nitrogen constituent in the deposited SiCN layer.

After the dielectric layer **318** is deposited, the substrate is moved to a process chamber in an integrated fashion (under vacuum), where a flowable low k dielectric film **320** is deposited over the dielectric layer **318**, as shown in FIG. **3D**. The low k dielectric film **320** may include carbon-containing silicon oxides (SiOC), such as BLACK DIAMOND® and BLACK DIAMOND® II available from Applied Materials, Inc., of Santa Clara, Calif.

The substrate may be transferred to another process chamber while under vacuum. The low k dielectric film **320** is cured through a thermal process combined with UV or e-beam as additional energy sources. Alternatively, the curing of the dielectric film **320** may be performed in the same chamber where the low k dielectric film **320** is deposited.

The curing temperature is about 400 degrees Celsius or higher, and at this temperature, the silicon-hydrogen and silicon-hydroxide bonds in the dielectric layer **318** are reduced, enhancing cross-linking and densification. Therefore, the dielectric layer **318** now has good barrier properties, thus becoming a passivation layer **322**. Other treatments of the dielectric layer **318**, such as by high density plasma (HDP), e-beam, microwave, or implantation, may also improve the barrier properties of the dielectric layer **318**, thus, forming the passivation layer **322**.

In summary, methods for forming passivation layers for metal columns are disclosed. The passivation layers may be self-formed and self-aligned during the curing process of the low k dielectric layer, as a result of the dopants in the metal

6

columns moving to the interface and reacting with the oxygen and silicon in the low k dielectric layer.

While the foregoing is directed to embodiments of the present invention, other and further embodiments of the invention may be devised without departing from the basic scope thereof, and the scope thereof is determined by the claims that follow.

The invention claimed is:

1. A method for forming passivation layers, comprising: forming metal columns over a substrate; depositing a conformal layer on vertical surfaces of the metal columns; depositing a dielectric material between and over the metal columns and the conformal layer; and curing the dielectric material to form a passivation layer on the vertical surfaces of the metal columns.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein the conformal layer comprises manganese, aluminum, zirconium, or hafnium.
3. The method of claim 2, wherein the conformal layer is selectively deposited on vertical surfaces of the metal columns.
4. The method of claim 3, wherein the metal columns are deposited over a dielectric layer.
5. The method of claim 4, further comprising deactivating surfaces of the metal columns and the dielectric layer prior to depositing the conformal layer.
6. The method of claim 5, wherein the deactivating surfaces of the metal columns and the dielectric layer comprises reacting the surfaces with alkylsilane compounds.
7. The method of claim 1, wherein the conformal layer comprises silicon nitride, or carbon doped silicon nitride.
8. The method of claim 7, wherein the metal columns are deposited over a dielectric layer.
9. The method of claim 8, wherein the conformal layer is deposited over the metal columns and the dielectric layer.
10. The method of claim 9, wherein the conformal layer is deposited at a temperature between about 50 degree Celsius and about 200 degrees Celsius.
11. The method of claim 1, wherein the metal columns are formed by forming a metal layer over the substrate and performing one or more reactive ion etching processes on the metal layer.
12. The method of claim 1, wherein the metal columns are formed by depositing a sacrificial layer over the substrate, forming a plurality of trenches in the sacrificial layer, depositing a metal layer into the trenches, and removing the sacrificial layer.
13. The method of claim 1, wherein the dielectric material is a low k dielectric film.
14. The method of claim 13, wherein the dielectric material includes carbon-containing silicon oxides.
15. The method of claim 1, wherein the metal columns comprises copper, cobalt, tungsten, nickel silicide, or cobalt silicide.
16. The method of claim 1, wherein the curing the dielectric material is performed by a thermal process combined with UV or e-beam as additional energy source.
17. The method of claim 1, wherein the curing the dielectric material is performed at a temperature of about 400 degrees Celsius or greater.

* * * * *

UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
CERTIFICATE OF CORRECTION

PATENT NO. : 9,318,383 B2
APPLICATION NO. : 14/923957
DATED : April 19, 2016
INVENTOR(S) : Naik et al.

Page 1 of 1

It is certified that error appears in the above-identified patent and that said Letters Patent is hereby corrected as shown below:

In the specification

Column 5, lines 28-29, delete "trimethylsiylacetylene," and insert -- trimethylsilylacetylene, --, therefor.

Signed and Sealed this
Eleventh Day of October, 2016

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Michelle K. Lee". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Michelle K. Lee
Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office